

Serial No. 09/618,794

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a reaction chamber in communication with said charge port, said reaction chamber being capable of receiving and enclosing the plurality of discrete combinations of reactants disposed linearly within said chamber; and

a discharge port comprising an air lock, distinct from said charge port, in communication with said reaction chamber to sequentially discharge reaction products of said combinations from said reaction chamber.

REMARKS

Claims 26-35 are now in this application, with claims 27-28 being withdrawn from consideration.

Independent claim 26, and dependent claims 29-35 are directed to apparatus designed for the performance of combinatorial chemistry operations, particularly those involving reaction between liquids and gases as illustrated by the preparation of diaryl carbonates by the reaction of a hydroxyaromatic compound with carbon monoxide and oxygen in the presence of a catalyst system. A key feature of the claimed apparatus is its capability of sequentially receiving and discharging a plurality of discrete reactant combinations and the products thereof.

Rejection of Claims 26-35 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph

Claims 26-35 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete by omitting the cooperative relationships of the vessel, charge port, discharge port and reaction chamber. As stated in by the Examiner in Paper No. 11, and in a telephone conversation on February 26, 2002, the specific issue deals with the question as to whether the "charge and discharge ports could be the one and the same". To clarify this apparent ambiguity, Applicants hereby amend claims 26 to include the limitation "**distinct from said charge port**" to the claim element that describes the discharge port. Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment should now obviate the 112, second paragraph rejection, and place claims 26, 29-35 in condition for allowance.

Rejection of Claims 26-27 under 35 USC 102 (b)

Claims 26 and 27 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by **Cody et al.** Claim 27 has now been cancelled in this response. Claim 26 has now been amended to include the "**air lock**" limitation previously recited in claim 28, and claim 28 has now been

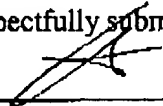
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cancelled. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Cody et al. no longer anticipates claim 26, and as such claims 26, 29-35 are now in condition for allowance

A prompt Notice of Allowance is, therefore, solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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ATTACHMENT A

26. A combinatorial chemical synthesis system, comprising a vessel having:

a charge port comprising an air lock capable of sequentially receiving a plurality of discrete combinations of reactants;

a reaction chamber in communication with said charge port, said reaction chamber being capable of receiving and enclosing the plurality of discrete combinations of reactants disposed linearly within said chamber; and

a discharge port comprising an air lock, distinct from said charge port, in communication with said reaction chamber to sequentially discharge reaction products of said combinations from said reaction chamber.